

# Key Messages

## Shortage of Behavioral Health Resources Means Many Californians Can't Get the Treatment They Need

### **Californians with behavioral health care needs struggle to find the treatment they need.**

- Almost one quarter of adults with a mental illness are [unable to receive the treatment they need](#) – a number that has not improved over the past decade.
- California has a [massive shortage](#) of mental health and substance use disorder treatment professionals, and access to behavioral health care [varies drastically](#) depending on the county.
- A [report](#) published by the RAND Corp. found that California has a shortfall of more than 7,500 beds for people with behavioral health needs. Residents in 24 of California's 58 counties have **no** in-county access to acute psychiatric hospital services.
- [Nearly half of children and adolescents](#) are not able to get the mental health services they need.

### **Hospitals are on the front lines of the mental health and substance use disorder crisis in California.**

- One-third of all inpatient hospitalizations and one-fifth of all emergency department visits [involve patients with behavioral health disorders](#).
- Hospital emergency departments are the primary place people go when in crisis. Due to a lack of alternatives to emergency departments and post-hospital care options, an estimated 750 patients remain in California hospitals on any given day despite being medically ready for discharge.

### **To address California's behavioral health crisis, strategies must mirror those in primary care — where the goal is to prevent illness and provide the right care in the right setting.**

- The state is investing billions to create comprehensive services for people with all levels of behavioral health needs. California must focus on prevention, early intervention, and community-based services to help those in need avoid hospitalization, incarceration, conservatorships, and institutionalization.
- Californians should support [Proposition 1](#) in March to better meet growing behavioral health needs through investments in housing and treatment settings, as well as greater partnership with counties.